
From: Sablad, Elizabeth
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2014 7:49 AM
To: Stuber, Robyn
Subject: FW: Hawaii News Clips: Honolulu Says It Will Fight New Rules For Sewage Treatment (HDOH water quality standards requirements)

Thought you might find this interesting. Here we go!

-Elizabeth

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Subject: Hawaii News Clips: Honolulu Says It Will Fight New Rules For Sewage Treatment (HDOH water quality standards requirements)

Honolulu Says It Will Fight New Rules For Sewage Treatment

By Sophie Cocke 03/12/2014 Civil Beat

Honolulu's Department of Environmental Services says that it's facing billions of dollars in improvements to three sewage treatment plants if new environmental requirements mandated by the state Department of Health are allowed to go into effect — and it's planning to fight them.

Some of the requirements are “ridiculous,” Lori Kahikina, director of the city’s environmental services department told members of the City Council’s Budget Committee during a Tuesday hearing to review the department’s proposed fiscal year 2015 budget. "So we are working with the corporation counsel and corporation counsel will hire a private attorney to fight this.”

The department has set aside \$100,000 for potential legal costs for the upcoming fiscal year.

The costs for sewage improvements would likely be passed on to Oahu ratepayers, city officials said.

Gary Gill, deputy director of environmental health for the state health department, said in an email that the department “looks forward to working with the City & County as they exercise their right under the law to contest the permits.”

Kahikina said that the permits for the city’s Sand Island, Kailua and Honouliuli sewage treatment plants are up for renewal and the state health department is imposing stricter water quality standards that regulate effluent levels. The city would have to put in place new equipment and technology in order to comply.

New permit conditions for the Kailua plant were supposed to go into effect last month, she told Civil Beat, but state health officials agreed to extend the deadline to later this month.

Similar permit conditions are expected to be required for the Sand Island and Honouliuli sewage plants in coming months.

Kahikina said that the stricter sewage rules are better suited for mainland states.

“We are different from the mainland," she said. "So we are a huge ocean, so it gets diluted and nobody swims at 200 feet, two miles out.”

The stricter state requirements would be in addition to a [massive 2010 settlement](#) with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that requires the city to upgrade its aging sewer lines and install secondary treatment facilities at Sand Island and Honouliuli. The federal requirements are expected to cost the city more than a billion dollars through 2035.

Mayor [Kirk Caldwell](#) has budgeted \$270 million next fiscal year to cover the sewage costs.